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ABSTRACT

Diagnostic teaching should be considered a two-step operation: the first half is skills assessment while the second half is related basic skills instruction. As part of the basic skills instruction, the students should be taught to be aware of certain features of the text itself when reading or writing: identification of topic, formats, relationships of parts to whole, and use of key words. To help them learn and store information in organized, meaningful units, students need to develop a framework for information by generating questions from text that will allow them to predict information, to create their own questions, and to develop a grid to organize information. Such a grid might have the questions down one side and categories of answers across the top. As the students read they verify their questions and jot down notes for answers. After reading, students decide which of their questions they can use for further research. They can then do a variety of writing activities, such as writing summary paragraphs to answer the questions, as a framework for their writing. The grid can also be used to develop vocabulary, with students relating words from a list to their questions. Another use of the grid is the identification of concepts and the kinds of relationships that exist among concepts through the use of cue words, circles, and lines. Thus, the grid is a system to teach students to consciously recognize and apply structure to new information. (HOD)

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The Integration of Reading and Writing Instruction
A Strategy for all Teachers

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Upgrading basic skills has to be everyone's business. This is particularly true for those of us who work with students who have failed or who are in danger of failing minimum competency tests. All content teachers need to be actively involved in the process of upgrading basic skills for these students, and we must all be involved in the process of diagnostic teaching. We need to consider diagnostic teaching as a two step operation: The first half is skills assessment and the second half is its related basic skills instruction. It is critical that the two constantly interact - that skills instruction accurately responds to the assessment. So flexibility is an important aspect that must be built into a skills instruction program. As I said, use the skills assessment in a variety of ways: consider the student's potential for learning the content, predict what his problem areas will be, consider the level of difficulty of the material in general. Be flexible, assume for the most part that a student who needs help in one area more than likely needs help in several, or most. Decide, through your informal assessment, which students will need instruction in basic skills individually as well as through content teaching.

As we plan instruction in basic skills for these students we need to look at the same interactive learning process, that is, the interaction of the text, the task and the reader. We must teach students

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to be aware of certain features of text itself when reading or writing text: identification or explication of topic, formats, relationships of parts to whole and use of key words.

And we need to look at the reader/writer himself. One important variable in a student's success in reading/writing is the status of information in his mind - information he will use to understand text he is reading and to produce his own text. When we assign a response to reading, a summary for example, we ask students to recompose text in terms of the text itself, and in terms of the reader's own experience with the information. He uses what he knows, his prior experience, his knowledge in general, or schema, to gain meaning from text and to produce it. Therefore, the quality of the reader/writer's schema or prior experience with information will affect his ability to use it in meaningful ways to comprehend and produce text. The structure or organization of information in the mind of the reader will have a critical effect on the way a student gains knowledge from text, and consequently the way he expresses that knowledge.

I'd like to look at some practical ways to work with students to help them learn and store information in organized, meaningful units, to teach them to develop a framework for information which they can use to read or write. We want students to use this framework which they already have to understand the writer's framework and to develop their own revised or expanded one.

One way to teach students to do this is to teach them to generate questions from text - Who, What, Where, When, Why and How questions - to predict information, to generate their own questions and to develop a grid to organize information. This grid will also provide the basis for writing activities, as we will see in a few minutes.

(Exhibit 1)

Here are specific suggestions to go about doing this. Before reading, have students preview the text, the title of book, title of a chapter, subject headings, first sentence of each paragraph. Then have them generate questions using who, what, where, when, why and how as a base. These questions can apply to most content material. Have students begin to predict questions and catagories of information. Then have them predict answers to their questions. You will have to teach students to predict. When presented with a title, passage or a question, encourage them to think about what they already know and guess about what might be included in the item under consideration. Then have them read to test their own ideas. The strategy of predicting should be related to forming questions from the who, what, where, when, how and why categories.

For example, if students are going to read an article about three branches of government, they can identify some "who" questions based on what they already know about government.

Students should understand that not every question will or can remain in its original form, but that some will change as a result of the in-depth reading. The revision of a hypothesis is an essential element in

processing and comprehending information. Also, all questions may not be answered as a result of the reading. Either the student will have to scan the material to find the missing information, or he might have to read additional material to locate the answer. So, unanswered questions will provide an impetus for review and a focus for further reading.

Students revise initial questions and categories as they read. Get them to go from literal to more abstract (inferential) level questions. Answering how and why type questions will require a deeper understanding of the text.

(Exhibit 2)

Now that we have these questions, let's look at how to create the grid itself. Put questions down one side and categories of answers across the top. This is an example of a grid after students' preview. As you see, students can make predictions before they even begin to read.

When students construct and use the study grid, stress should be placed on making predictions about questions and topics, and then revising, or adding and deleting on the basis of evidence gained from the reading. This will enable the development of an accurate, useful grid. It will also involve the students actively in the reading process. Topics will be originally developed from the previewing, with changes made as a result of the in-depth reading.

This is a simple grid; any number of grids would apply. Students use the who, how, what, when, where and why format and then developed sub questions. They surveyed the material, developed categories for

what they already knew about the three branches of government. So, they are using their prior knowledge as a source of information to predict what new information might be included in a text and to speculate about questions that might be raised and answered.

Now, with the grid in front of the students, have them begin to read. As they read they verify their questions and jot down notes for answers. The students fill in the grid as they read. As they do this they learn to organize information and to relate concepts in a meaningful way. They are also forced to interact with text at a deeper level. Research seems to indicate positive results of active interaction with text by a reader who learns to generate his own questions as he reads. This seems to be particularly true for students with low verbal abilities.

You will need to practice this with students often before they will be able to generate good questions and develop a meaningful grid. You might also want to introduce the questions one at a time, certainly not all at once.

After the student reads, he will go back to his grid, and make final revisions to his questions. He might want to eliminate questions, change some and add new questions. He might also want to revise categories, and at this point he can begin to see the writer's framework or focus. He also needs to evaluate information he has learned. Does he have enough information to make relationships in each category, to compare/ contrast, to see cause and effect, to see which questions he needs more information on?

After reading, students decide which of their questions they can use

for further research, because they are important, but have not been answered in this article. They can then do a variety of writing activities, using the grid as a framework for their writing. You might have them go back and star the most important questions, or those whose answers are the gist of the text. They might then write a summary paragraph to answer the questions, and develop paragraphs around the starred questions. Then, have the students check their summaries with the text. Or have students read to answer three of the six questions - the three which they judge might be the most important. Then, have them write a summary emphasizing these three questions. You might have the students trade their summaries and have their partner figure out which questions they have answered. Or, have students categorize questions into know/unknown questions a reader wants to know or doesn't. These techniques give students a focus for reading. The answers give a focus to writing, a point of view. The grid, the questions develop the writer's schema. They serve as his framework for writing.

(Exhibit 3)

Let us look at another unit - the word. Use the same grid to develop vocabulary. Before reading, have students predict vocabulary which might be relative to each category of questions. They might expect to read words such as senator, judge or president in the who category, for example.

Now change the task condition. Give them a list of words and ask them to relate your list of words to their questions: have them check to see which vocabulary words fit with which questions.

Another thing to do before reading is to have students define the words that they predict, or even words you give them. After reading, have them go back and check words they generated, or your list, or their definitions, to verify that the words are there and that definitions are right. Have students write definitions, write how words, ideas are related. Have them write their own analogies. Start slowly, like: "Executive: President: "Congress: blank."

Give them the first ones, then leave out one word. Discuss the relationships. Give them the first half of each analogy, for example, "President: blank:" As Congress: blank." Again discuss the possible relationships. Your goal is to have students go through the text to pick out critical words and to develop their own analogies. Once students understand relationships and relationships of parts to whole they will have better foundations for writing.

Another exercise using critical vocabulary words is to have students look at one of the words and generalize it and apply it to different contexts within the same categories.

Example: Executive - we all know is head of government, in our country is called President. Have students come up with names of other heads of government - monarch, king, prime minister. This gives them a basis for comparing/contrasting in their writing as well as for comprehension.

The stress we are putting on vocabulary is the understanding and semantic organization of words.

Teach students to use cue words in text to understand concepts and especially to help them pick out relationships between concepts. If they can't use key words, they won't always understand and pick out semantic relationships, like definitions and examples, or generate any kind of organized framework.

These are examples of possible cue words and the relationships they define. Any number of possibilities exist. Students take the key words that they've gotten from the material and use them in their writing - either in cloze paragraphs or summary. This way you are changing the task conditions. Cue words and their relationships can be used as the basis of a network.

(Exhibit 4)

I'm sure you've all seen some form of network or map, actually another kind of grid of the text. It is a system to teach students to consciously recognize and apply structure to new information by teaching them to identify concepts and the kinds of relationships that exist between them.

Concepts or main ideas are placed in circles and lines are drawn between concepts which specify their relationships. Cue words like "for example" and "such as" are used to identify the relationships that exist between concepts. Again the aim of this exercise is to get students to organize information into a framework as they read, which they can use for writing. You will need to practice this with students for a while before they will be able to do it on their own. Literal information is of course easier to network. The aim is to get students to network

abstract, inferential material.

Have two groups of students network two different texts. Have them trade networks and write texts based on their partner's networks. When they check the summary with the original, they will find important points they missed in the reading or writing.

My point is that instruction in reading and writing is logically integrated in the comprehension process. Both reading and writing are constructive acts which begin with the knowledge of the reader. Therefore, the better the quality of this knowledge (such as the organization of information), the better the quality of his reading and writing process.

EXHIBIT 1

QUESTIONING PROCEDURE

BEFORE READING

- PREVIEW TEXT
- GENERATE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
- CREATE GRID: QUESTIONS AND CATEGORIES

DURING READING

- FILL IN GRID
- TAKE NOTES ON ITEMS THAT DON'T FIT

AFTER READING

- REVISE QUESTIONS
- EVALUATE INFORMATION

EXHIBIT 2

QUESTIONS	CATEGORIES BRANCHES LEGISLATIVE	EXECUTIVE	JUDICIAL
WHO belongs to each branch works for each branch			
WHAT are they called can each do can each not do			
HOW are they different does one belong do they function does one get job			
WHERE are they located			
WHY are they divided			
WHEN did they separate			

from Wilder, Ludlum and Brown,
This is America's Story
Houghton Mifflin, 1968
pp 231-232

EXHIBIT 3

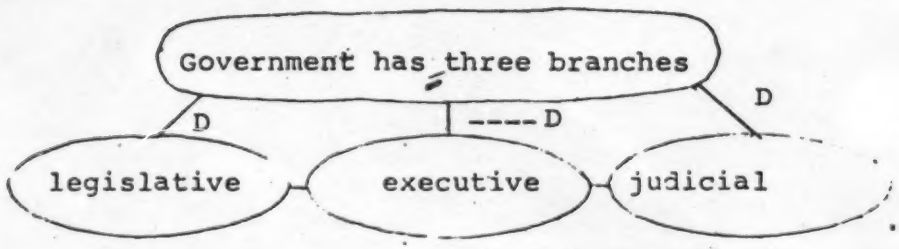
VOCABULARY

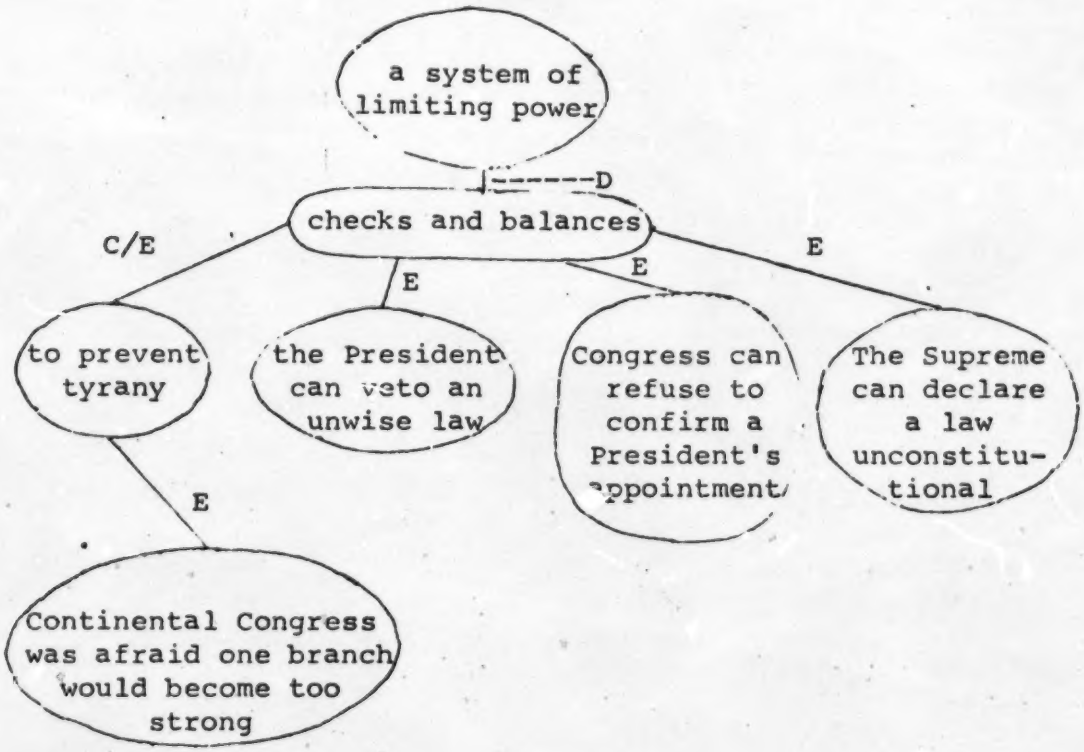
PREDICT VOCABULARY

government	veto
ruler	legislature
Washington	Constitution
president	judicial
power	legal

CUE WORD	RELATIONSHIP
that is	definition
for example	example
however	compare/contrast
namely	example
although	opposition
because of	cause/effect
since, then	sequence
so	problem/solution

EXHIBIT 4





E = example
D = definition
C/E = cause & effect
PS = problem solution